



Guidelines for Foodservice Establishments **to Safely Reopen after a Power Outage**

Foodservice establishments must report extended power outages to the Meriden Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), Environmental Health office.

An extended power outage is one that lasts for four (4) hours or longer and puts the establishment's ability to operate in accordance with Connecticut Public Health Code Section 19-13-B42 at risk, especially with keeping foods at safe internal temperatures of 135°F or above or 41°F or below. Other concerns include the ability to wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact equipment and surfaces, whether food preparation equipment is working properly, availability of approved water, adequate lighting, etc. MDHHS will inspect the food establishment before allowing it to reopen and resume food preparation.

When there is a power outage, the foodservice establishments are to follow the rules set by MDHHS, which include closing until approved to reopen. The requirements include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Report the power outage at your establishment to the Environmental Health office at 203-630-4226.
- Know the time the outage happened and how long the establishment was without power.
- Monitor the temperatures of refrigerated and/or frozen food products in the establishment (keep doors closed as much as possible).
- Know if perishable food items have been in the danger zone (above 41°F or below 135°F) for more than 2 hours. Voluntarily destroy perishable food products that have been in the danger zone for more than 2 hours.
- Know if the establishment's water supply was compromised by the outage and follow local and state health department guidance.
- Do not use/serve foods that have been in the danger zone for more than 2 hours even if you cook or reheat them.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize all food contact surfaces that came in contact with any unsafe foods (foods that were in the danger zone for 2 hours or more).
- DO NOT connect portable generators to equipment or begin using an alternate water source before getting approval from MDHHS.
- Check that all equipment used for cooking and holding hot foods is working properly before beginning to prepare food again.
- Purchase fresh food only after power is restored AND equipment has returned to proper temperatures. Have invoices for new stock available for review by MDHHS.

Improper holding and cooking temperatures are the most common cause of foodborne illness!
Following these guidelines will keep your customers and employees safe